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Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance: participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

Report of the Second Committee*

Rapporteur: Ms. Vanessa **Gomes** (Portugal)

I. Introduction

1. The Second Committee held a substantive debate on agenda item 69 (see A/61/429, para. 2). Action on sub-item (c) was taken at the 12th and 25th meetings, on 12 October and 7 November 2006. An account of the Committee's consideration of the sub-item is contained in the relevant summary records (A/C.2/61/SR.12 and 25).

II. Consideration of draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.4 and Rev.1

2. At the 12th meeting, on 12 October, the representative of Argentina introduced a draft resolution entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development" (A/C.2/61/L.4), which read:

"*The General Assembly*,

"*Reaffirming* its resolutions 50/19 of 28 November 1995, 52/171 of 16 December 1997, 54/98 of 8 December 1999, 56/102 of 14 December 2001 and 58/118 of 17 December 2003,

* The report of the Committee on this item will be issued in three parts, under the symbol A/61/429 and Add.1 and 2.

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"*Reaffirming also* its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and 51/194 of 17 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

"*Emphasizing* the need for coordination between relief and development activities in the context of humanitarian emergencies, taking into account the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,

"*Recognizing* that the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of man-made and natural disasters and chronic situations characterized by hunger, malnutrition and poverty, must rely not only on the formulation of a well-coordinated global response within the framework of the United Nations but also on the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

"*Recalling once again* that prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for emergencies on a global level depend, for the most part, on the strengthening of local and national response capacities, on the availability of financial resources, both domestic and international, and on the effective use of these resources,

"1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General, prepared in pursuance of its resolution 58/118 on the participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development, especially in the three main areas on which action has been focused;

"2. *Recognizes* the effort being made by this initiative to strengthen national and regional agreements aimed at facilitating coordination between the United Nations system and standby and trained national volunteer corps, in accordance with accepted United Nations procedures, through the United Nations Volunteers and other agencies of the system;

"3. *Notes* the emphasis placed on the development of mechanisms to facilitate the local management of dangerous situations, through the organization and participatory involvement of vulnerable communities and the training of the members of local volunteer corps;

"4. *Recognizes* the effort of the White Helmets model in helping to involve potentially or actually stricken populations themselves in the tasks of planning, training, mobilizing and providing immediate response in disaster situations;

"5. *Notes* the importance of international efforts being made by the initiative to strengthen the comprehensive regional mechanisms for managing prevention and response activities in emergency and disaster situations, in particular its model for setting up regional networks of focal points, with a view to linkage with other international structures, and accordingly, encourages Member States to establish their own national centres for the coordination of White Helmets so as to continue providing to the United

Nations system an accessible global network of rapid response services in cases of humanitarian emergency;

"6. *Takes note* of the efforts made by the World Food Programme and the 'White Helmets' to coordinate integration mechanisms that allow for joint action in the framework of food security, on the basis of their general agreements of 1998;

"7. *Encourages* operational partners of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Volunteers and the World Health Organization, to draw upon the voluntary expertise of the White Helmets in providing psychosocial support to the stricken population in emergency and disaster situations, which has been successfully tested, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his report;

"8. *Recognizes* that the White Helmets initiative can play an important role in the promotion, diffusion and implementation of the decisions adopted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration, and invites Member States to consider means to ensure the integration of the White Helmets initiative into their programme activities and to make financial resources available to the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers;

"9. *Invites* the Secretary-General, on the basis of the extensive international work experience acquired by the White Helmets, as recognized by the Assembly since the adoption of its resolution 49/139 B, the first resolution on the White Helmets initiative, and in view of the success of coordinated actions carried out with, inter alia, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Volunteers, to suggest measures to enhance the integration of the White Helmets initiative with the work of the United Nations system, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session."

3. At its 25th meeting, on 7 November, the Committee had before it a revised draft resolution entitled "Participation of volunteers, 'White Helmets', in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development" (A/C.2/61/L.4/Rev.1) submitted by Andorra, Angola, Antigua and Barbuda, Argentina, Armenia, Austria, Barbados, Brazil, Canada, Chile, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, Cuba, Ecuador, El Salvador, Finland, Georgia, Guatemala, Guyana, Indonesia, Israel, Italy, Japan, Kenya, Liberia, Luxembourg, Mexico, Monaco, Norway, Paraguay, Peru, Poland, the Russian Federation, Serbia, Slovakia, South Africa, Turkey, Ukraine, Uruguay and Viet Nam. Subsequently, Afghanistan, Cape Verde, Ghana, Grenada, Iceland, India, Nigeria, Pakistan, Portugal, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Senegal, Timor-Leste and the United Republic of Tanzania joined in sponsoring the draft resolution.

4. At the same meeting, the Committee was informed that the revised draft resolution had no programme budget implications.

5. Also at the same meeting, the Committee adopted draft resolution A/C.2/61/L.4/Rev.1 (see para. 6).

III. Recommendation of the Second Committee

6. The Second Committee recommends to the General Assembly the adoption of the following draft resolution:

Participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development

The General Assembly,

Reaffirming its resolutions 50/19 of 28 November 1995, 52/171 of 16 December 1997, 54/98 of 8 December 1999, 56/102 of 14 December 2001 and 58/118 of 17 December 2003,

Reaffirming also its resolutions 46/182 of 19 December 1991, 47/168 of 22 December 1992, 48/57 of 14 December 1993, 49/139 A and B of 20 December 1994, 50/57 of 12 December 1995 and 51/194 of 17 December 1996 and Economic and Social Council resolutions 1995/56 of 28 July 1995 and 1996/33 of 25 July 1996,

Emphasizing the need for coordination between relief and development activities in the context of humanitarian emergencies, taking into account the internationally agreed development goals, including those contained in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1]

Recognizing that the international community, in addressing the growing magnitude and complexity of man-made and natural disasters and chronic situations characterized by hunger, malnutrition and poverty, must rely not only on the formulation of a well-coordinated global response within the framework of the United Nations but also on the promotion of a smooth transition from relief to rehabilitation, reconstruction and development,

Recalling once again that prevention, preparedness and contingency planning for emergencies on a global level depend, for the most part, on the strengthening of local and national response capacities, on the availability of financial resources, both domestic and international, and on the effective use of those resources,

Recognizing the need to integrate a gender perspective in the design and implementation of all phases of disaster management,

1. *Takes note* of the report of the Secretary-General,[2] prepared in pursuance of its resolution 58/118 on the participation of volunteers, "White Helmets", in the activities of the United Nations in the field of humanitarian relief, rehabilitation and technical cooperation for development, especially in the three main areas on which action has been focused, namely dissemination of the concept of volunteerism, support to Latin American and Caribbean countries and response to requests for emergency assistance;

2. *Recognizes* the effort being made by this initiative to strengthen national and regional agreements aimed at facilitating coordination between the United

[1] See resolution 55/2.

[2] A/61/313.

Nations system and trained standby national volunteer corps, in accordance with accepted United Nations procedures, through the United Nations Volunteers and other agencies of the system;

3. *Notes* the emphasis placed on the development of mechanisms to facilitate the local management of humanitarian emergencies, through the organization and participatory involvement and empowerment of affected communities and the training of the members of local volunteer corps;

4. *Recognizes* the effort of the White Helmets model in helping to involve stricken populations or those at risk in the tasks of planning, training, mobilizing and providing immediate response in disaster situations;

5. *Notes* the importance of international efforts being made by the initiative to strengthen the comprehensive regional mechanisms for managing prevention and response activities in emergency and disaster situations, in particular its model for setting up regional networks of focal points, with a view to linkage with other international structures;

6. *Encourages* Member States to identify their respective national focal points for the White Helmets in order to continue to provide the United Nations system with an accessible global network of rapid response facilities in the event of humanitarian emergencies;

7. *Takes note* of the efforts made by the World Food Programme and the White Helmets to coordinate integration mechanisms that allow for joint action in the framework of food security, on the basis of their general agreements of 1998;

8. *Encourages* operational partners of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Volunteers and the World Health Organization, in providing psychosocial support to the disaster-affected population in emergency and disaster situations, to draw, as appropriate, upon the voluntary expertise of the White Helmets, which has been successfully tested, as indicated by the Secretary-General in his report;

9. *Recognizes* that the White Helmets initiative can play an important role in the promotion, diffusion and implementation of the decisions adopted in the United Nations Millennium Declaration,[1] and invites Member States in a position to do so to consider means to ensure the integration of the White Helmets initiative into their programme activities and to make financial resources available to the Special Voluntary Fund of the United Nations Volunteers;

10. *Invites* the Secretary-General, on the basis of the extensive international work experience acquired by the White Helmets, as recognized by the Assembly since the adoption of its resolution 49/139 B, the first resolution on the White Helmets initiative, and in view of the success of coordinated actions carried out with, inter alia, the United Nations Children's Fund, the World Food Programme, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs of the Secretariat, the United Nations Development Programme and the United Nations Volunteers, to suggest measures to enhance the integration of the White Helmets initiative with the work of the United Nations system, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its sixty-fourth session in a separate section of the annual report on strengthening of the coordination of emergency humanitarian assistance of the United Nations.